



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

ALPHA COMPANY, "STRYKE"  
2<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION, 8<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT (M)  
FOB KALSU, IRAQ  
APO AE 09312

March 05, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: Stryke Family Members and Loved Ones

SUBJECT: March 2006 News Letter

It has been over 3 months since we have deployed and time is flying by. Time goes by quicker over here the busier we are and we have been keeping more than busy in our area of operations. Stryke Company has been performing a variety of different missions all focused on creating a more safe, secure, and prosperous future for Iraq. Operation Stryke Synergy involved the capture of numerous area insurgents by our 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon lead by First Lieutenant Ashley Ellis and Sergeant First Class Mark Tatum. The squads that conducted the mission were lead by Staff Sergeant Charles Cunningham and Manser Hutchinson. During Operation Stryke Resolve our 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon conducted an air assault which resulted in uncovering two separate caches consisting of a multitude of weapons and munitions. The find was spearheaded by Sergeant Rodrigo Martinez whom was awarded a Certificate of Achievement for his efforts. The initial discovery and subsequent search was also facilitated by Private Laquentin Carter along with Private First Class Christopher Casella. The platoon leader for the mission, First Lieutenant Michael Harley was commended by the Task Force Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Howard, for his precise conduct of the operation resulting in the find. Both operations were successful because they were conducted jointly with our Iraqi Army counterparts which significantly enhances our capability. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon lead by First Lieutenant Zachary Maxcey and Sergeant First Michael Taylor are keeping busy with training the Iraqi Army. Their squad leaders Staff Sergeants Luke Smith, Darryl Greene, and Patrick Trujillo have taken the lead in ensuring that the future of Iraq is secured by a professional, competent, and exemplary Army. Both Operation Stryke Effect and Operation Stryke Endeavor incorporated elements from all elements throughout Stryke Company. Both of these operations focused around minimizing insurgent activity in our area of responsibility. We continue to focus on the incorporation of Iraqi Security Forces in each and every mission that we conduct. Iraq has a promising future, it is rewarding to see the forward progress that is happening everyday as a result of the combined efforts of our partnership with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.

February has brought some personnel changes to Stryke Company. We have a new Executive Officer. Braxton Canfield, whom was the previous XO, will move on to become the Battalion Scout Platoon Leader. Our new XO is CPT Neil Prakash, whom is a hardened combat veteran coming to us from Germany. The XO is my second in command of the company which entails a tremendous amount of responsibility. Our 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon will also receive a new Platoon Leader. 1LT Ashley Ellis will move on to become the Delta Company Executive Officer. He will be replaced by 1LT Christopher Pollard whom is coming to us from the Officers Basic Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

SPC Shawn Rader and SPC Abraham Hernandez have recently joined our 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon as Stryke Soldiers as well.

Stryke Company conducts a weekly recognition of it's "Heroes of the Week." Every week each platoon nominates one Soldier each, then an assessment is made which narrows the three down to one. The Stryke Company Hero of the Week is a prestigious recognition that exemplifies the best of the best within the company. The following Soldiers have been recognized as our heroes since we have been deployed: SGT(P) William Rivera, SGT Dana Messer, SGT Rodrigo Martinez, CPL(P) Anthony McLean, SPC Alon Paul, SPC Travis Carlson, and PFC Christopher Allen.

The following Soldiers have been promoted since we have been deployed: CPL Alon Paul from SPC, SPC Robert Cumbo from PFC, SPC Phillip Dukett from PFC, SPC David Taylor from PFC, SPC Jordan Corum from PFC, SPC David Taylor from PFC, PFC Joel Head from PV2, and PFC Michael Shorter from PV2.

Stryke Company conducted a multitude of training events prior to deployment in order to best prepare the company for combat operations in Iraq. During that training period Stryke Soldiers were recognized for their outstanding performance and execution of their assigned duty positions. The following Soldiers have recently received awards for their achievements leading up to deployment: SGT Stephen Estabrook and PFC Sean Gleason were both awarded the Army Commendation Medal for their top score achieved throughout the entire Battalion as "Top Gun" during Gunnery. The following Soldiers received the Army Achievement Medal for their distinguished performance during Gunnery: SGT Hector Ibarra, SFC Joseph Booth, SGT Marlon Mejia, PFC Jeffery Smith, PFC Victor Norori, and PFC Brandon Gardner. SGT Joshua Bradfute, CPL(P) Anthony McLean, CPL Walter Reall and PFC Eugene Tebuteb all received the Army Achievement Medal for their outstanding efforts during train-up at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Both CPL(P) Anthony McLean and SPC Roy Pointer received the Army Achievement Medal during the culmination training exercise at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

All of the Soldiers of Stryke Company bring a different skill set or level of experience to the table. It is the combination of all of the different backgrounds and experiences that each Soldier brings to the table that maximizes the effectiveness of to the total team. The following are recognized as our unsung heroes. Our communications specialist CPL(P) Anthony McLean has been doing a superb job keeping all of Stryke Company's communications and digital platforms fully operational. He has been awarded with an Army Achievement Medal for his extreme initiative and dedication to our Company's efforts. PFC Andrew Ruff has been awarded the Army Achievement Medal for heroism due to actions performed in Houston, TX in which he saved a civilian's life by performing rapid first aid. SSG's Eduardo Morales and Cesar Sanchez headed the team of Stryke Soldiers that represented the U.S. Army during the Arena Bowl opening ceremonies in Las Vegas, Nevada where they rappelled from the dome ceiling with the game bowl. We have recently promoted some of our team leaders from Specialist to Corporal because of their demonstrated leadership potential. CPL Timothy Rae has been at the head of numerous major operations leading his four man team with outstanding results. CPL Richard Morales has stepped up to the next level and taken charge by formulating a tight-knit cohesive team. All of our team leaders play a critical role in the successful mission accomplishment of each and every

mission conducted as they are empowered with maneuvering our Soldiers during operations. The fine Americans that are selected as team leaders with leading Stryke's Soldiers during combat operations are: SGT Seth Leday, SGT David Torrez, SGT Jonathan Wray, SGT Kevin Meehan, SGT Jeffery Sweeney, SGT Dana Messer, SGT Brian Ling, SGT Thomas Fortenberry, and SGT Rodrigo Martinez.

Our headquarters Soldiers have also been playing an integral role in operations. Each and every Soldier in Stryke Company is on the front line of minimizing insurgent activity in our area of operations. SGT Hector Ibarra has been performing heroically as the leader of our company headquarters contingent which has been performing a multitude of functions. PFC's Luis Ortega, Jeremy Davis, Elwood Hale, and Michael Ostello have successfully accomplished all assigned missions with miraculous results. Because of their commitment to excellence Stryke Company has been more effective in enhancing everyday operations.

Thank you again to all our families and loved ones who bear the burden of taking care of our personal lives and families while we are away. Without your support we would not be able to successfully perform our mission everyday. We greatly appreciate your understanding of why we do what we do as Soldiers. Every Soldier chooses Soldiering as a profession for different reasons, however there is a shared common denominator; there is no greater sense of accomplishment or self-fulfillment than having the distinct opportunity of service during this pivotal time. The responsibility is immense and this is one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives. This experience has honed our appreciation for the importance of families and friends to a higher level. We greatly respect all of your support.

The Soldiers of Stryke Company are extremely proud to be serving their country during this historic time in our nation's history. We have been blessed with high caliber patriots whom sacrifice everything they know to serve a cause higher than their own personal ego. Our Soldiers perform at the spearhead of freedom's frontier in order to make the world a safer place. It is both an honor and a privilege to have the ability to make a difference at the macro level so that all people have the ability to make their own choices and decisions in life while living in a free society. The people of Iraq have a bright future because of the hard work and dedication that our Soldiers perform everyday. Because of their dedication to duty, commitment, professionalism, and the mission the world is a more secure environment.

Let Freedom Ring!

DAVID W. ZAINO  
"STRYKE 6"  
CPT, IN  
Commanding